

Fentanyl

Fentanyl is a potent opioid that carries a higher overdose risk than heroin and other prescription opioids. While fentanyl can have therapeutic uses, for anesthesia and pain management, this fact sheet concerns illicit fentanyl.

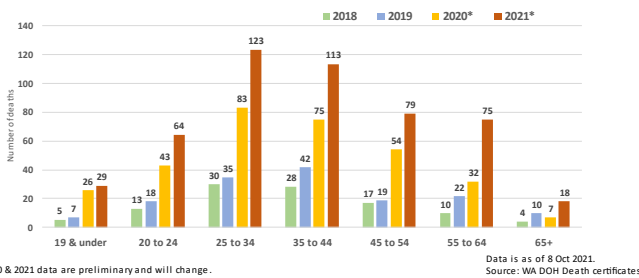
Fentanyl is manufactured illicitly and pressed into counterfeit pills that resemble narcotic pharmaceuticals. These pills are sold on the street without the user knowing that they contain fentanyl.

Users have no way of knowing the amount of fentanyl that may be in the substances that they take or if fentanyl is even present. The amount of un-knows regarding fentanyl creates a high risk of overdose and death.

Figure 1 illustrates a trend in overdose across all age groups with an alarming trend in overdose in young individuals.

Figure 1.

Synthetic Opioids First 6 months (Q1-Q2)



Recent Syringe Service Survey activities conducted by the University of Washington indicate an increase in smoking fentanyl as a method of use. Individuals who smoke fentanyl do not need syringe services. This can be a challenge as syringe services may serve as an opportunity for individuals to start treatment.

Mitigation Efforts

The State Opioid & Overdose Response Plan and its workgroups continue to work towards strategies and solutions to these fentanyl trends. Potential mitigation efforts include:

- Increasing naloxone distribution methods. A statewide mail order naloxone system.
- A statewide deployment of naloxone vending machines
- Increasing the use of fentanyl test strips as a method of engagement.
- and the Potential for paraphernalia laws to protect organizations that deploy fentanyl test strips.
- Increased access to Opioid Use Disorder treatment services through the implementation of mobile Opioid Treatment Program vans.

For more information:

Visit www.stopoverdose.org for information about fentanyl, how to recognize fentanyl, and what to do in the event of an overdose. Questions about Washington’s response to this issue can be address to the below:

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